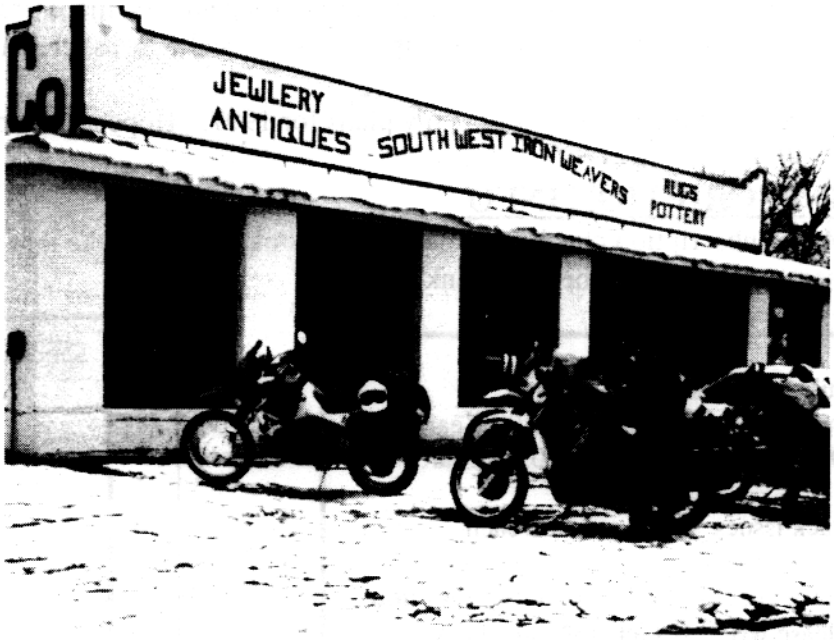
Kawasaki 650 Dual Sport News

January/February 1997

MOTO MUSING

Gino Pokluda

Retrospect



Happy New Year! Welcome to 1997. I certainly hope everyone had a safe holiday and is ready for another great year of motorcycling. I always tend to sit back and reflect on the past year just about now. It sort of soothes the soul to sit by a warm fire and think of the great riding from the year before and what great rides are to be had in the coming year. I've marked my calendar for a couple of rallies already and hope to get the KLR650 out into the dirt a little more often this year. As the snow falls outside, it's almost hard to believe that five short months ago, while on my way to the FSSNOC Thumper rally in Salmon, Idaho, I staggered into the Super 8 in Moab, my throat so parched from the 100+ degree heat that I could barely talk to the desk clerk. All in all I must say it has been a very good year. I did a good deal of riding, I started the Kawasaki 650 Dual Sport News (with a lot of help from my friends I might add) and subsequently met some great people.

So what's in the works for 1997? Well, for starters, I would like to begin to refine the Newsletter to a more consistent format. Second, I would also like to focus more on what you want to read and not what I want to write. Last, but not least, I want to provide you a newsletter that you will keep subscribing to. While this last goal may have you wondering whether I'm trying to make a quick buck, believe me, I'll be lucky to break even. More importantly, the more people we have subscribing and contributing to the K 650 DSN, the better

Inside This Issue

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value you get for your hard earned dollar.

How do I plan to accomplish this? The best way is to go to the readership and find out what they want. I'm doing that via the attached survey. Please, please, please fill it out and send it in, I've even included postage! I also want to start getting you in touch with each other. We have about a half dozen or so readers headed for Alaska this summer and it would be great for these folks to talk to each other and share information. To accomplish this I plan on compiling a directory of readers and providing it to the readership.

Needless to say, I also have some interesting articles planned. Items on the burner include lowering a KLR650, KLR727 engine bump-up, aluminum panniers, more tire evaluations, more reader's rides, and more comprehensive tech tips compliments of local Kawasaki dealerships.

There you have it; a preview of my plans for 1997. Hope all of you have a great year of safe riding.

SUBSCRIPTION INFO

Make subscription check payable to: **Gino Pokluda** and note that payment is for the K650 DSN in the memo part of your check. Thanks.

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NEW E-MAIL ADDRESS

Please note that K650DSN now has a new e-mail address: **k650dsn@aol.com**

Back Issues

K 650 DSN now has a back issue policy. Back issues are $3.00 each copy. An index of the years previous issues will be printed in the January/February issue of each year. To request back issues, please send your request and check to: **Kawasaki 650 Dual Sport News, Back Issues, PO Box 698, Sandia Park, NM 87047.**

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OOOPS!

The November/December issue has the wrong phone number listed for Sagebrush Machine Shop in Milford, UT. The correct phone number is (801) 387-5575. Sorry for any inconvenience.

FROM THE READERS

Readers, please keep those letters coming. I'll try to get them all published when and where space permits. Thanks - Ed.

I have a 1993 KLR - the best motorcycle I've ever owned. I have about 15,000 miles on it so far. It has a Corbin seat in black, a tall Rifle after-market wind screen, a Dynojet Carburetor and K&N filter and Michelen Sirac tires. It's a super-fun-all-around scooter. My riding partner has a Honda Transalp and we go everywhere we can on these bikes.

Paul Svoboda

******

Your newsletter is great. I hope the next issue has some ideas on lowering the seat height on the KLR. I'm not quite 5'8". We tried taking the seat apart and cutting several inches of the foam off. This helped but the seat is still higher than I'm used to (and the seat isn't that comfortable anymore!). I hope someone has some good ideas.

Mary

The good news, Mary, is that I think we have a solution to your problem. The bad news is that it isn't cheap and I won't be able to get to write about it for a couple of issues. It involves a Corbin seat, sliding the fork tubes up in the triple clamps and replacing the rear shock with a Tengai shock. In theory this should work fine, but I haven't had a chance to test it. By my calculations, you will drop the seat height on a KLR650 by almost four inches. - Ed.

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I currently have a 1987 KLR650 with Progressive fork springs, Supertrapp exhaust and IRC tires. Back in 1991 I used "Killer" to win the AMA National Field Meet Championship (in the under 900cc class) as well as the District 16 Road Riding Championship. Best street riding day has been 792 miles. I also have a 1984 Harley FXRT and a 1992 Sportster with a Velorex 562 sidecar. I'm also a MSF instructor and a sidecar safety program instructor.

Mark Enbring

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I have a couple of questions about my Tengai, maybe you could help. Thanks.
1. Where can I get the Dunlopad S55 front brake pads? My dealer has a listing for the rear, but not the front.
2. Where can I get stainless steel brake line?

Jeffrey Bryn

S55 brake pads are not available for the Tengai front brake, which is a dual piston instead of the single piston as found on the KLR650. If you go with a S45 front, you will notice a significant improvement in front brake power and feel since you have a larger rotor and stronger caliper. Be sure to put fresh brake fluid in. White Brothers sell braided brake line kits which are excellent. You pick a length of braided line and choose the appropriate ends for your application. Dunlopad brake pads are also available from White Brothers. See your local dealer for White Brothers products. -- Ed.

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My KLR: I purchased my '93 KLR650 new in May of '93. I had just sold my street bike, and I knew that I REALLY wanted a 100GS, but couldn't swing it then. I also wanted a Tengai, but couldn't find one at the time. (still want one) I then decided that the KLR was really the one other bike I would be satisfied with (for the time being, according to my wife). I have a history of changing bikes quite often. Anyway, I was drawn to the big gas tank and versatility. I have given up serious dirt riding, but wanted to stay with the option of "exploring". Well, after over 10,000 miles and four years I tried to sell it last fall, and decided that I would not be able to replace the bike with anything but the same thing. I don't even think a BMW would make me as happy.....

The first thing I changed were the tires as the OEM rubber was gone after my first 2,500 miles. (Did I mention that I think nothing of 1000 mile weekends with a lot of 80 MPH stretches? Hard on tires.) I put on Avon Gripsters and have been fairly happy with them, but I don't think I would want to travel too far off of the pavement with them. They are getting great mileage, though.

I then decided to try to reduce the vibration problems at the hands. I installed a bar-snake and heavy bar-end weights. This has really helped a lot, but I still have the tingles after stopping after a couple of hundred miles. While at the handle bars, I also fit a throttle stop to the twist grip. My modification included a couple of small holes and a small plastic wire tie to act as a stop. This is to help my long road trips as I had some wrist damage and I can't hold the throttle for hours on end. I did have to shorten the actual grip, but I still have enough room. I just purchased one of the cheap throttle locks available at any dealer.

As I'm sure everyone knows, the stock saddle is a real pain on long rides so I installed a Corbin seat along with a Rifle windshield for comfort. I went with the shorter of the two screens, and have been very happy with that choice. I will install the stock screen for any known off-road rides, however.

For performance reasons, I have installed an E.A.R. series Supertrapp, and a K&N air filter. I plan to try the carb needle upgrade that was mentioned in the last news letter. (In MN, it's hard to do much testing between October and April.)

I use some soft luggage for trips, with an Eclipse expandable tail trunk. I want to come up with a tank bag, but have not seen anything that seems to work. I am looking for leads here.....

I guess I have to say that I have a keeper here. I would only be tempted by a Tengai or Transalp that was new or in GREAT shape. I could even consider adding one to my garage as I really don't think I could give up the one I have.

Let's get a rally going, even if it's not big, it would be fun. Ron

Hopefully we'll have a soft luggage review in the spring and that should include some tank bags. I am considering a K 650 DSN Rally, but too early to tell right now. -- Ed.

UPDATES

GIVI FIVE-STARS RACKS

Givi Five-Stars luggage racks are still available from Capital Cycle and should be available from Givi USA soon after you read this. In a phone conversation I had with Hal at Capital Cycle in November, we determined that the 1995 European KLR650 had a different frame than the 1995 USA model. This is why the latest batch of racks did not fit for those who ordered them. When ordering Givi racks for your 1995 or newer KLR650, tell the order person that you need racks for a 1994 KLR instead. They'll fit, trust me. Remember, it could take up to 5 months to get your racks as Capital Cycle orders about three to four times a year.

GIVI USA hopes to have Five-Stars racks in stock by mid to late January. According to Paul, the racks are in route, but must first pass through Customs. Paul informed me that he is reserving the first batch of racks for K 650 DSN subscribers, so be sure you mention the Newsletter if and when you order. You can call Givi USA at (704)679-4123.

GIVI FIVE STARS CENTER STANDS

As stated in the above paragraph, you need to order a 1994 center stand for your 95 or newer KLR650. The center stands are still available from Capital Cycle and take 3 to 5 months to receive. Jake Jakeman from Sagebrush Machine Shop (801)387-5575 has high grade bolts with blind shanks cut to the proper length to replace the soft bolts supplied by Five-Stars. The number for Capital Cycle is 1-800-642-5100.

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RIDE TO THE MOON

Our five KLR adventurers are alive and well on their way to Argentina. They left Los Angeles on November 2 and as of November 30 they were resting in Panama having traveled over 5000 miles. They have had quite the trip and nothing I can write can compare to the excellent journal entries they have been keeping. If you have access to the Internet, you need to read the articles and look at the wonderful pictures. The Ride To The Moon homepage can be found at **http://www.baumgartens.com/rttm/**.

For those who cannot access the Internet, I hope to be able to provide their compiled journal entries with the RTTM Expedition's permission. For now, I will provide a very brief summary of the major events. The five intrepid riders are doing well and fortunately no one has been injured. Only minor cases of food poisoning and Dysentery have been experienced. For the most part, the guys have all managed to keep their wits, humor and strength at nominal levels despite being pounded by rough roads, fogged with

pesticide, subjected to sweltering heat, heavy rain and bone chilling cold. They have all learned a great deal about each other and the importance of communication when riding in groups.

As is the case with any expedition of this nature, the machinery and equipment chosen is vital. Their KLR650s are performing well with only one breaking down with a rare water pump impeller seal failure. Another bike failed during a deluge, but started later and is running fine. The bikes and their riders have been pounded by some of the worst road conditions I have ever heard of and numerous tip overs. One KLR and its rider rolled off of a road embankment while attempting to pass a bus and another had its headlight smashed by a rock. All bikes have lost numerous bolts and screws due to rough roads but have continued to soldier on .

More importantly, however, is the fact that these five young men have a mission to raise money to save children in impoverished areas and fight cancer. They have worked to assist the Save The Children network all along the way. With this in mind, K 650 DSN has contributed to the STC fund. If you would like to contribute, here's how. Make out a tax deductible check to: **The American Cancer Society** and send it to:
Riding To The Moon, c/o The ACS, 235 Montgomery Suite #320, San Francisco, CA. 94104

or

Make out a tax deductible check to: **Save The Children** and send it to:
Riding To The Moon, c/o Save the Children, 3740 25th St.#102, San Francisco, CA. 94110

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1996 KLR650 MODEL IMPROVEMENTS **Joel Wood**

I have been doing a bit of detective work lately and with the help of Rick at California Kawasaki and Rick (yes, two Ricks) at our own R&S Kawasaki in Albuquerque, I have this information to share.

For the 1996 model year, Kawasaki not only changed the color and graphics of the KLR650, they made quite a few significant mechanical improvements as well.

First the counter shaft now utilizes a washer and threaded nut to hold the sprocket on, replacing the old 'C'clip system. The crankshaft halves are now 10% heavier for smoother power transfer. The transmission gears have been redesigned for quieter operation, more strength, and taller gearing in second and third gear. The clutch gained an extra plate which required a change in the basket design. Kick start kits for '87-'95 models will not fit the '96 on KLR650. A new kit may become available in the future.

Thanks for this info, Joel. I know some folks have been wondering what changes were made on the newer models and the press has been nothing more than vague. --Ed.

IN THE WORKS

FUEL TANK options, **SEAT** modifications, **ENGINE GUARDS, ALUMINUM PANNIERS,** and **SOFT LUGGAGE** are all in the process of being evaluated for an upcoming issue. Please send in any thoughts you have and stay tuned. Also, the local BMW dealer has agreed to a dual sport shoot out between the **BMW F650** and the **KLR650.** I'm hoping the comparison will be in May/June issue.

JOURNEY TO THE ARCTIC OCEAN

T. Kenny

Reprinted by permission from Kawasaki's Good Times Magazine

A Cheyenne locomotive engineer took a trip this summer that is testimony that some individuals literally go to great lengths for adventure.

While a handful of Cheyenne Service Unit Harley-Davidson enthusiasts can boast about their chrome bikes and riding to the annual August pilgrimage in Sturgis, South Dakota, Fourth District engineer D.L. "Buddy" Trujillo and his neighbor, Matthew Hunter -an internal medicine doctor- went on a journey that pales Sturgis. It is not for the meek, it is the type of adventure featured on an extreme sports television show , and was altogether an odyssey forever remembered. Trujillo and Hunter rode their KLR650 motorcycles from Cheyenne, Wyoming to the Arctic Ocean and back. "We went to the farthest point in North America that you can drive to," said Trujillo, "on our enduro bikes."

Trujillo and Hunter left Cheyenne early on Friday, July 7. Their route took them across Canada on the Cassier Highway, through Alaska and across the Arctic Ocean on the James B. Dalton Highway to Prudhoe Bay and the gates of the Arctic Oil Camp. With the iron offshore oil rigs and the Arctic Ocean

The riders didn't just ride, though. They took time to fish the Great Russian and Kenai rivers; watched bears fish in the Katmai River; took an airplane ride around Mt. McKinley; and landed a ski plane on one of its huge glaciers. In Anchorage, they were met by family members who flew from Cheyenne to meet them.

Asked why the Arctic Ocean, Trujillo said he and Hunter wanted to ride the James B. Dalton Highway - an old industrial highway that was opened to the public last year. He said the attraction of the highway was its 478 miles of dirt road, "some good, some tough. I wouldn't recommend this ride to anyone who isn't hardy -it is very rough."

Trujillo and Hunter rode 8,571.9 miles on the 32-day trip. Trujillo said they averaged about 500 miles a day, which included over 2,000 miles of dirt roads throughout Canada and Alaska. "It was a flawless trip," said Trujillo. "Most of the time it was pouring rain with no wind protection. We had to keep going. There was wind, rain, dust and construction on the Cassier Highway -it was hard on my body. It was something not everyone could handle. It was a great adventure and I'm glad that I did it."

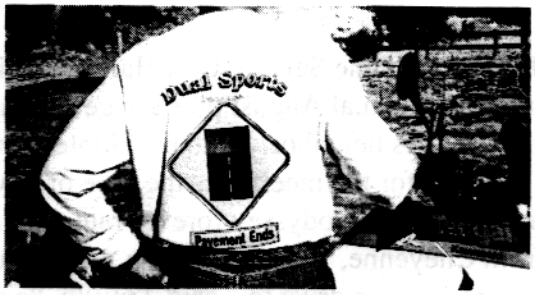
He praised their Kawasaki KLR650 motorcycles saying, "Those bikes took a beating with not one iota of trouble," he boasted, "I'd recommend those bikes to anyone."

Trujillo said the best part of the journey was the scenery and the people. "Everywhere we went the people treated us great." He said the worst part of the trip was riding for long hours and the wind. "The ride from Rock Springs to Laramie through 70 mph winds in the Red Desert was the hardest part of the trip."

Despite the mind boggling difficulty of this trip, and the strength and stamina a journey such as this would require, those who know Trujillo were not surprised that he completed this trip. And Hunter, Trujillo's doctor and mountain-climber neighbor must be of the same mettle. In line with his character,

Trujillo said, "I did it for the adventure and one day I will be able to tell my kids I rode to the Arctic Ocean on a motorcycle --something very few people even attempt.

K 650 DSN T-SHIRTS ARE HERE!



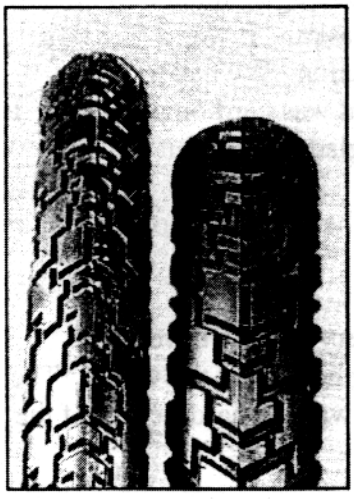
Kawasaki 650 Dual Sport T-shirts are here. They are long sleeve 50/50 shirts in a light ash color. The front has the Kawasaki 650 Dual Sport logo as seen on the front page of the Nov/Dec issue of the Newsletter in traditional Kawasaki blue and green. The back has the official Pavement Ends highway warning sign in yellow and black. An eye catching shirt to say the least. T-shirts are $14.50 + $3.50 for shipping. Send check to made to **Gino Pokluda** to **Kawasaki 650 Dual Sport News, PO Box 698, Sandia Park, NM 87047.** T-shirts are $22.00 (includes shipping) for those outside the US.

SURVEY

Please take a few minutes to complete the survey attached to this newsletter. Feel free to add additional pages and send photos of your bikes and any mods you have made to them and enclose them in the attached stamped envelop. Thanks.

TIRES

AVON GRIPSTER

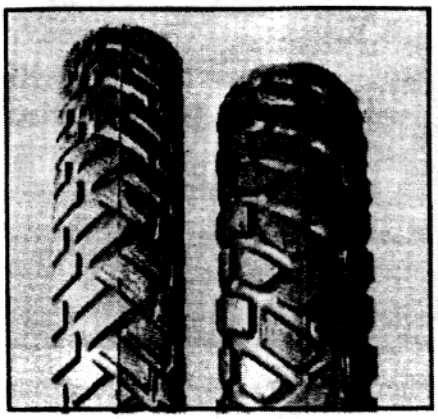


AM24 Front AM24 Rear

To be honest, I do not have much experience with the Avon Gripster. I just levered a set onto my Tengai and only have about 300 miles on them. I do, however, have several friends who ride BMW R100GS bikes and they love the Gripsters. As a matter of fact, most of them are converts from the Metzeler Enduro 3 Sahara dual sport tire. Reports are quite consistent that the tire is quiet, works very well in rain, has very good pavement manners and is pretty good in off-road situations. Mileage for the rear tire seems to be consistent at about 8000 to 9000 miles per tire and 15,000 for the front. My short term experience with the tire confirms these findings. The Tengai is definitely quieter than my IRC GP110 equipped KLR650 and seems to corner slightly better to, though this may be due to the Tengai's lower stance. The AM24 is also readily available, inexpensive and is probably the most widely used tire on BMW dual sports next to the OEM Metzelers. One thing I will say though, the Griptser's blocky arrow head tread has to be one of the most unique tread patterns around. When buying the Avons from a dealer or mail order warehouse, be sure you order the

AM24 tube type. Avon makes a tubeless version for the tubeless Akront rims found on BMW R100GS bikes. Also, Avon offers a radial version called the AV33 and AV34 Gripster H. Do not confuse those with the AM24 as they are not available in the sizes for the KLR or KLX. I was able to procure my Gripsters for about $130.00 for both tires.

METZELER ENDURO 3 SAHARA



Enduro 3 Front **Enduro 3 Rear**

I didn't have to go far to get information regarding the Metzeler Enduro 3 Sahara. As it turned out, most of the Avon Gripster users were former Enduro 3 Sahara users. The Sahara was the first dual sport tire that had the unenviable task of trying to combine on-road performance with off-road durability and high speed operation. Most riders will say that Metzeler did succeed in addressing the three requirements with the Enduro 3 Sahara and most Sahara users stated that when the tires were fresh, they had no equal in the on-road/off-road class. Riders reported the tire to be very sticky on the pavement, good to very-good in off-road situations, and able to hold its own in sand and mud. It is no wonder that BMW chose the Enduro 3 Sahara to be the OEM tire for the R100GS. But "Fresh" is the operative word here because the Metzeler Enduro 3 Sahara does not last long. Again I interviewed BMW riders who were running or had run the angularly blocked tire on their bikes. Most rear tires yielded a mere 5,000 miles and some disappeared within 3,000 miles. If you decide to run the Enduro 3 Sahara's on your KLR, you should see better mileage as the KLR is substantially lighter than the BMWs. Some riders indicated that the Metzelers were more sensitive to tire pressure than other tires they had used. Others complained that the Enduro 3 Sahara's were also a bit on the noisy side. Making matters worse is the fact that the Metzelers are not cheap. The best price I was able to find for a 130/80 17 rear was $123.99 only $6.00 less than I paid for *two* Avon Gripsters. If the price doesn't scare you and you still must have these tires, good luck finding them. Once again, I called various dealers and mail-order warehouses and found that Enduro 3 Sahara's were no where to be found with back orders of 3 to 4 weeks being normal. Despite these somewhat negative characteristics, the Metzeler Enduro 3 Sahara is a proven dual sport tire and has a rabidly loyal following. Go to a BMW rally and you will see many R100GS and R80GS running fresh sets of the rare rubber. So if you want the best of the best and don't mind the premium price, the Enduro 3 Sahara is your ticket. If you want a tire that will give the Metzeler a run for its money and last two to three times as long, choose the Avon Gripster AM24.

TECH TIPS

FULL SERVICE

Not very many motorcycle shops allow the customer into the service area for one reason or another. So when Rick at R&S Kawasaki Suzuki in Albuquerque, New Mexico agreed to let me photograph a general service on my Tengai and write about it in the K 650 DSN, I jumped at the chance.

My Tengai was a used unit with about 5,000 miles on the clock. It had spent a good part of the last two years living a pathetic existence in a dusty corner of a garage. When the previous owner finally removed

the skis, old blankets, and set of tire rims that covered the bike, I knew I had to give it a good home. I had ridden it a few times, but I needed to check out the bike before I really started doing longer rides on it and the full service/article combo would cover that and contribute to the K650DSN as well.

I arrived at R&S on an unseasonably warm November morning and the bike went straight to the service bay. One of the secrets to doing a great job on any project was to have a clean and neat area to work. This bay certainly fit the bill with tools in their place and plenty of work surface clean and available. The mechanic working on the Tengai today was Andrew, who was very familiar with the KL650 engine.

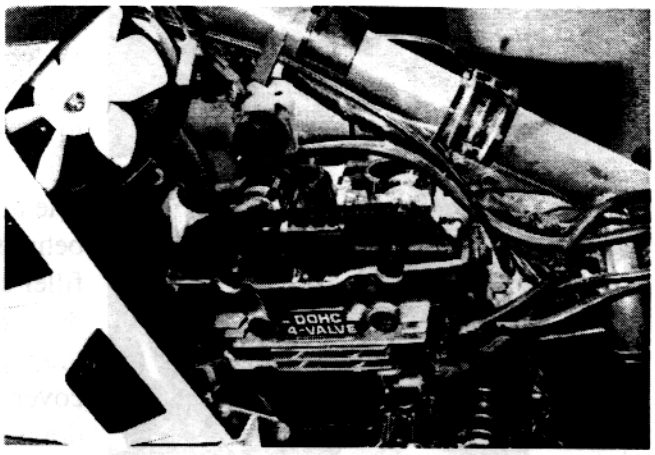
A general service on a KLR, Tengai or KLX includes inspect valve clearances and adjust if needed, replace spark plug, inspect battery and connections, clean and adjust drive chain, clean and re-oil the airfilter, inspect tires, inspect carburetion and check all fluid levels. Valve inspection can only be done on a stone cold engine, so that was first on the list. The majority of the time involved in valve inspection is removing all the needed parts to get to the valves. The side covers and seat are the first to come off. Then the hoses are removed from the tank venting system and carburetor. The radiator shrouds are removed and then the tank was unbolted and lifted off of the bike. If you want to make friends with your KL mechanic, don't bring your bike in with a full tank of gas. With all of the body parts off Andy turned his attention to the air filter. The air filter must be cleaned and oiled, doing it first allows it to dry while all of the other services are being performed.

With the filter washed in detergent and hanging out to dry, Andy went to work on removing the valve cover. To do this, you must first remove the upper engine mount brackets and the spark plug wire. On the Tengai, the fan is unbolted and moved to gain additional room to work. Next, the valve cover bolts are removed and the cover is lifted off. A word of caution at this point, each valve cover bolt has a washer and an O-ring. Make sure you have all of them before removing the cover as they sometimes fall into the head and the get left in there to blow the engine up the first time you try to run it.

Andy then brought the engine to top-dead-center by stabbing the starter and bringing the cam lobes into position. You can also do this by removing the inspection cover on the left-side crankcase cover and lining up the T-mark with the indicator. With TDC found, the valves are inspected. Here you see where the tools of the trade are worth purchasing. Andy used feeler gauges that were close to 10" long which are available from Matco or Snap-On. These made checking the valve clearances much easier and are a must. You will use 2 pairs of feelers for valve clearance inspection. For the intake valves, you will need .10mm and .20mm feeler gauges. The .10mm gauge should slide in and the .20mm shouldn't. For the exhaust side, you need .15mm and .25mm gauges. The smaller gauge should slide in but the .25mm gauge should not.

The KL650 engine uses shim-under-bucket valve adjusters which require the cam to be rotated out of place and the shims replaced with shims of different thickness in order to bring clearances to spec.

Fortunately, however, most KL650 engines do not require a valve clearance adjustment within the first 10,000 miles. Hopefully in a future issue we will go through a valve adjustment, for now only clearance inspection will be covered.



With valve inspection out of the way, it was time to button up the top of the engine. Once again, make sure you have all washers and o-rings before sealing up the engine. The KL650 is blessed with a reusable rubber valve cover gasket which can be reused as often as needed as long as there are no cracks or visible deterioration of the gasket. Do not over-tighten the valve cover, it is very expensive to repair stripped lugs in the KL650 engine. With the cover back in place, the upper engine mounts and fan are bolted back into place and torqued to spec.

With the top closed up, Andrew turned his attention to other items on the full service check list. Next on the agenda is replacing the spark plug. It is a good idea to give the area around the plug a good shot of air to prevent any debris from falling into the plug hole when it is removed. Plug replacement is standard on the full service; make sure the gap is set correctly and read the old plug to get a feel for how your bike is running. On a normal running machine, the spark plug should have a light tan or gray dry appearance. Dark soot or wet black plugs are not normal and indicate a problem that should be corrected. With the new plug installed, reattach the plug wire and inspect for cracks or any other deterioration and replace if necessary. Both my spark plug and wire looked good so no carb adjustment was necessary. Check all cables for kinking and make sure they are routed correctly.

The battery was next on the list. Mine was embarrassingly low and had to be pulled out of the bike and filled. Inspect terminals for corrosion and check leads for any cracking or chafing. With the battery back in place and the locator plate tightened, it was time to replace the fuel tank.

Andy slid the tank back onto the bike and onto the frame mounted rubber biscuits until the two mounting holes lined up with the frame lugs. Before connecting the fuel lines and vent hoses, he tested all cable actuated controls to make sure nothing got caught or kinked. With the cables moving freely, the two rubber hoses to the petcock and the two rear vent lines were attached- Note: some KLRs only have on rear vent line. With all of those little details noted, Andy bolted the tank down.

Next, the dry air filter was oiled and mounted back into the airbox. The seat was then bolted in place as were the side covers. The bike was started and allowed to idle a few minutes to warm the engine for an oil change. With the engine idling, tire pressures were checked as were brake fluids. The rear drive chain was inspected for proper slack. The chain should be able to move about 1.5 to 2 inches. If the chain is very dirty, it should be cleaned with a brush and kerosene. wiped dry and oiled with gear oil. Do not use gasoline, paint thinners or other cleaning solvents as they will destroy the o-rings in the chain.

Once the engine was warm, Andy proceeded to the change the oil. Thankfully, the KL650 engine is relative easy on the home mechanic when it comes to oil changes. If you decide to change your own oil,

please do not dump the oil on the ground or into the sewer system. Very small amounts of motor oil will contaminate large amounts of water. Take you oil to a service station to be recycled or disposed of correctly.

The drain plug is easy to get to and the filter resides behind a small cover on the right side. Remove the oil filler cap then place a pan under the engine. Remove the drain plug and drain the oil into a pan then replace the drain plug. Move the pan to under the right engine side cover and remove the small oil filter cover. More oil will drain into the pan as you pull out the filter. Remove the shaft from the filter and discard the used filter. Place the shaft into the new filter and re-insert into the filter category. Replace the filter cover and tighten the cover bolts.

Andy noted that most KLRs are over filled with oil. The correct amount of oil is when the oil level is between the two lines in the sight glass and not necessarily 2.5 liters. Andy added 2 quarts of oil and then began to check the oil level and added as necessary. When the desired level was reached he replace the filler cap and started the bike and allowed it to idle while checking for leaks. After about five minutes, he shut off the engine and waited a few minutes and the rechecked the oil level and added oil as necessary until the level was right at the upper line.

A note about oil. Motor oil has to rank up there with religion and politics as far as lively topics of discussion are concerned. Andy recommended against the use of synthetic oils citing excessive clutch wear as the result of the slippery fluid. Although I tend to agree and use only motorcycle oil in all of my machines, I know of many others that would prefer to run synthetics in their machines.

The final items in the inspection are the switches, lights, turn signals, headlight high and low beams, horn and brake fluids. With all of those within the correct guidelines, the bike was ready for a quick road test. Total elapsed time for the full service was a tad over 2 hours.

One final note when taking a bike to the dealer for service. I know from working on my own machines that dirt, mud and miscellaneous grime make a maintenance job more difficult. Do your mechanic a favor and take them a clean bike with a near empty tank. Also be sure to tell your mechanic of any problems you may be experiencing. Don't always assume they will discover the problem on their own in the service department.

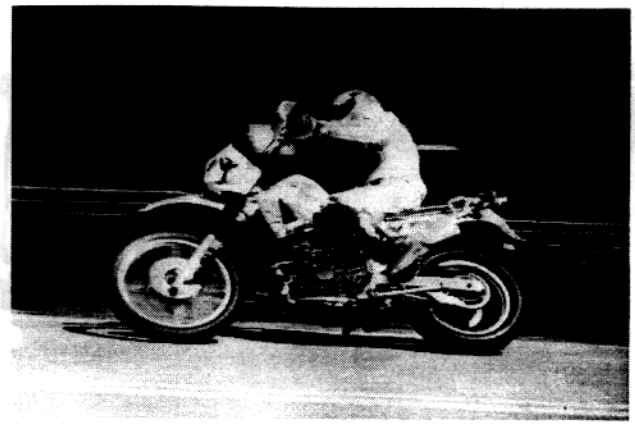
Well, there it is in a nut shell. Kind of a real quick overview of the full service on a KL650. Some of these items will be revisited in later issues as we discuss maintenance in more detail. Hope this gives you a better understanding of what goes on in the service bay and what your 650 should be going through as far as maintenance is concerned. The KL650 engine is one very tough unit. Andy tells me that they have only seen one engine self-destruct due to a failure in the compression release mechanism.

Besides that any other engine problems they had encountered were rider inflicted. With periodic maintenance, the KL650 engine should provide many, many miles of service. It is up to you to get that service done.

KLR727

WARNING!

The following article should be read with care. Read the article sitting down. If your pulse quickens or your heart begins to pound, stand up and step away from the Newsletter.



If you're ever riding around Gillett, Pennsylvania and you are passed by a blue and white KLR with sparks flying off of a foot peg and an engine that sounds like it was pulled from a P47 Thunderbolt, don't worry, your not hallucinating and there is no need to adjust your set. It's probably just Steve Kesselring running errands on his KLR727.

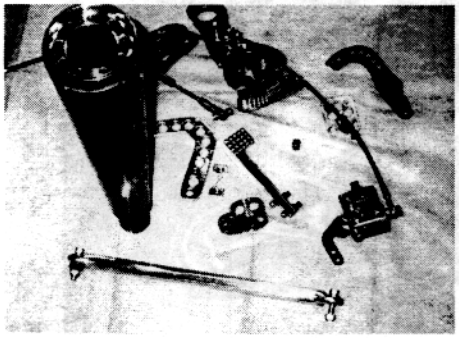
Steve is owner and operator of Quality Engine R & D in Gillett, Pennsylvania and is no stranger to the world of high performance engines. Since his high school years, Steve worked on high performance race car engines and motorcycle chassis when he wasn't racing motorcycles and snowmobiles.

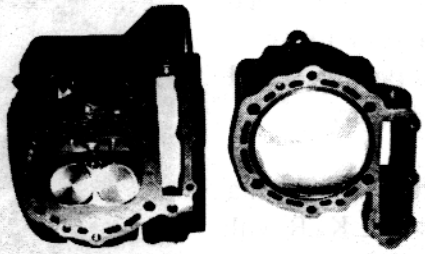
After a brief hiatus from motorcycling, Steve decided to get back into it and acquired an '87 KLR650. After a few thousand miles, Steve discovered what we already know. If there was a nuclear holocaust, roaches, Keith Richards and KL650 engines would be the only things to survive. But yet, he still yearned for a little more power, so he worked his magic on the big thumper and hence the KL727 engine was born.

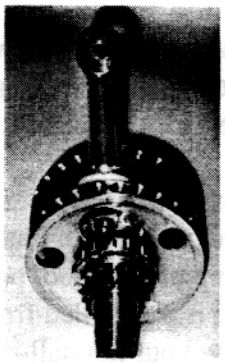
Steve made his own ductile iron cylinder sleeve, piston, valves and valve guides. He then flowed the head, had some special cams ground and installed springs with titanium retainers. With the engine in order, he then had to deal with getting the precious mixture of gasoline and air into the combustion chamber. Steve liked the Mikuni and simply "reworked" it a little. Early on, Steve had to route cooling lines around the engine, but has since devised a better more efficient plan of cooling the mini nuclear reactor 727. Steve also fabricated an exhaust system of his own design. It's a complete stainless system that flows better than a Supertrapp with 20 disks and is probably quieter.

So what did Steve end up with and was it worth it? Well for starters, he has a big thumper that will wick up to 114 mph and has double the horsepower and torque. Rear wheel horsepower for the KLR727 is up to 50hp from the stock 26hp. And for those who want their cake and to eat it too, fuel mileage was *increased* 20%. Steve used his racing know-how to pick race quality materials that allowed him to

match the stock piston weight to within a gram, thus allowing for the use of the stock counter balancers to tame vibration. Just about now, some of you may be asking yourselves if the transmission is up to it. Steve did say that he replaced the stock clutch plates with Barnett plates and heavy duty springs. Besides that, however, the tranny is stock.







Okay, say the nay sayers, but how is 727's reliability. Steve has almost 30,000 miles on the KLR727 now with no problems. "It's my workhorse," he says of the KLR. "I use it for running errands, picking up parts and such." Want more good news? Steve hopes to begin marketing the KL727 engine upgrades and exhaust system. He has already successfully marketed upgrades to Cycle Gear for other engine parts such as the KLX321 upgrade for the KLX250.

If you would like to talk with Steve, feel free to call him, he'll be more than happy to talk KLR's or any other bike for that matter. But don't ask him about the KL770 engine he has, we'll be discussing that in the next issue.

For more info, call Steve Kesselring at **Quality Engine R & D, RR1 Box 3125, Gillett, PA 16925 (717)596-3030.**

GEAR

First Gear Kilimanjaro H/T Jacket and Pants

One of this year's new introductions to the First Gear apparel line is the Hypertex (H/T) Kilimanjaro Jacket and Pants. Constructed of sturdy Koslan and abrasion-resistant Dynax, this waterproof/windproof combination is sure to be tops on many adventurer-tourer's wish lists this winter.

The Jacket is black with gray, purple or red highlights and comes with a wide variety of thoughtful and useful features, such as a removable 200 weight fleece liner. Two large breast pockets, which contain three smaller pockets inside, are accessed through a combination of velcro, mesh and zippers. The configuration of these pockets allows the rider

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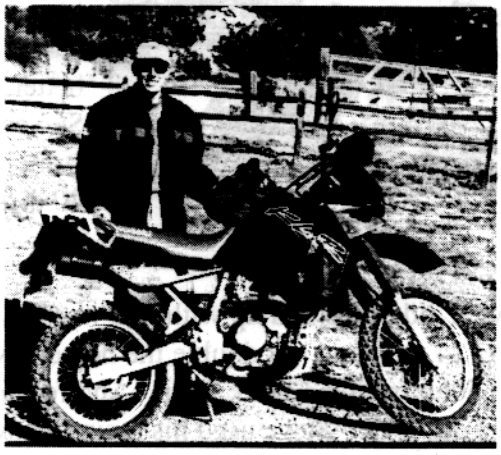

to essentially customize the amount of ventilation the chest area receives, just by reorganizing the order in which he closes the pocket. Two more generously sized pockets, located below the waist belt on the jacket skirt are easily large enough for an extra pair of gloves or a few hearty PowerBars. Eight-inch long pit zips and a full width back vent round out the ventilation needs for those hot summer rides. For winter needs, the fleece liner is more than adequate for even the coldest days. I rode my 30 mile commute a few weeks ago in a rugby and jeans with this jacket and pants on top and was very comfortable -- it was 16 degrees!!

The pants are not marketed as "Kilimanjaro" H/T pants, but they are an exact match - right down to the webbing on the belt and are just as feature loaded as the jacket. The full length leg zippers, paired with velcro, can either seal out the wind in the winter or help ventilate in the spring. The zipper/velcro combination is also found in the crotch area to successfully keep all the important parts warm! The pants have two large front pockets and one decent sized back pocket. And these pants are warm! With their non-removable full-length synthetic insulation, they are very toasty on the chilliest mornings. In addition, the cut is long enough to keep the wind off the ankles when wearing riding boots, although they are a bit marginal for hiking boots.

A couple of other random features deserve mention. The fleece jacket has snaps at the wrists to keep the arms from pulling out of the shell upon removal. The fleece lined neck collar keeps the wind from going down your chest, and the elastic key lanyard within the right breast pocket is a nice, subtle touch. There is lots of coverage by body armor in this duo. First Gear used the thick 12mm Temperfoam armor in the shoulders, elbows, back, knees and hips to protect the rider in case of the unfortunate. Finally, there are patches and bands of reflective materials to highlight the rider in the dark.

It is a great setup but there are a couple of criticisms. First, the arms on the fleece jacket are about 2 inches longer than the arms of the shell. A little bit longer would have been OK, but the length lends itself to lots of bunching near the wrists and on the forearms, which makes it real tough to wear long gloves comfortably. The other complaint about the jacket is that the tall neck collar has a 2 inch tall hunk of velcro right at the Adam's apple -- and it does not like to bend. This may loosen up a bit with time, but I would like to be able to turn my helmet before spring rolls around! I have very little to criticize on the pants. They could use about another 1/2 inch in length, but I am also tall for my waist size, which may be part of the problem there.

Overall, I love this gear!! I have worn a lot of mountaineering jackets in my day, and I wish that those companies could make a product as warm, comfortable and bombproof as this. It feels tough, looks good, and wears well, street or dirt. It is roomy without being too fat, long without being a dress. A one year warranty comes with both. And hey, reasonably priced -- about $300 for the jacket and $180 for the pants. What more could a dual-sport rider ask for in a setup?

Big Paw Mountainworks

One of the things that makes the First Gear Kilimanjaro H/T jacket work so well in the winter is its fleece liner. Ounce for ounce, acrylic fleece is one of the most versatile fabrics you can wear in cold weather. It retains warmth when wet, is easy to take care of, and is relatively inexpensive. When layered with a windproof shell, acrylic fleece will keep you plenty warm, which is the secret to the success of the Kilimanjaro.

But you say you don't have the bucks to spring for the First Gear jacket, well, not to worry. Acrylic fleece jackets are available in varying weights and fits that can be layered under your existing jacket. This is were Big Paw Mountainworks of Cedar Crest, New Mexico can help. Diane and Mike Mitchell offer a line of acrylic fleece garments of varying weights designed to be layered. If they don't have exactly what you need, chances are they will be willing to make it for you to your specifications. I own several products from Big Paw and can attest to the quality and workmanship of their products. Some acrylic pile fabrics even have a wind-blocker material sandwiched in between to layers of fleece for added wind protection, however this material is not normally stocked by Big Paw.

So if you love your current jacket, but wish for more warmth than the thin liner can provide, check into an acrylic pile jacket to wear underneath. It could make the difference between riding and riding cold. For more information on fleece garments, call Big Paw Mountaineering at (505)281-1765.

WORD FROM KAWASAKI

When the general manager of my local Kawasaki shop asked me if I would be interested in talking to someone at Kawasaki Motor Corp. USA who was knowledgeable of not only the US product line, but also all other products lines, I has only one answer, YES! So a phone interview was set up and I prepared by jotting down some questions.

The day of the phone interview came and I was pretty excited about talking to John Hoover, Director of Sales Services at Kawasaki Motor Corporation, USA. We started by talking about the Kawasaki 650 Dual Sport News and its readership and then moved into a discussion about the dual sport market. John reiterated what many of us have already heard; i.e the bottom has fallen out of the US dual sport market. John went on to explain that the best selling dual sport was the Suzuki DR350 and it sold under 2000 units. Kawasaki's best selling dual sport was the KE100 and it sold fewer units than that. "The KLR650 sold even less than that." he added. I asked why the dual sport market faired so poorly in US market and flourished in Europe. He had no real answer but did speculate that one big culprit was the ATV market. "ATV sales numbers are on the rise and we are all watching them carefully." Remember that sales number for the DR350? The highest selling ATV model in the US sold over 30,000 units. That is one 'specific' model. Families are buying several ATV's, trailering them places and going on ATV adventure trips. It takes less skill to ride an ATV and the whole family can enjoy them. In Europe, an ATV directive was issued which basically gave ATV's the same rights as scooters and John thinks the US is not far behind. The bottom line is that once a household gets a sportbike or big buck cruiser and a bunch of ATVs, there simply is no money left for the dual sport bike.

Our conversation then switched to the dual sports themselves and their future. John assured me that we would still see the KLR650 for a couple more years at least no matter what happens to the market. "The KLR650 will keep coming but don't expect any dramatic upgrades" he said. I asked about the European

KLR650 and if it will ever come to the US. The European KLX based KLR650 will probably never make it to the US. The big selling point of the US spec KLR is its fuel capacity and the European KLR has done away with that. "I rode the Euro KLR650 through Arizona and thought it was a good bike." John said. "It was tuned for European emissions so it lacked power, but the small tank was a hindrance. I could maybe get 100 miles on a tank." John also explained that when the Euro spec KLR and the KLE500 were presented to dealers at the dealer show and the bikes were given thumbs down. Dealers want cruisers and cruiser parts, because that's what sells. I think at this point, it is safe to assume that we will never see the KLX650 again.

We then began discussing in more detail dual sports in general. "We have lots of neat stuff on the drawing board and all of our European models could easily make it over if the market were to ever swing", John said. Specifically to the KLR, John told me that a center stand and a lowering kit had been sketched but would most likely never be available. "It would require changes to the chassis and the assembly line and the low numbers of units sold just doesn't justify it."

John and I concluded our conversation by agreeing that it would be good to keep in touch. I will be calling John before every issue of K 650 DSN goes to press so I can get the latest scoop on the dual sport market. John will also be receiving the K 650 DSN, so please send you comments to the newsletter and they will make it to him. In summary, even though things don't look good for the US dual sport market it can all change. Who would have thought that ATVs would be cutting into dual sport sales, and cruisers would be blowing the doors off of sport bike sales? What can you do about it? Talk to your dealer and tell them you want dual sport bikes and introduce your friends to these wonderful machines and their exemplary functionality. When the going gets tough, the tough get going and that's what dual sports is all about.

LATE NEWS

Just when I thought it was safe to button up this issue, I find two vendors who sell products specific to the KLR650. I will hopefully have more info in the next issue but for now I will simply give the specifics.

Dual Star is a company that specializes in the manufacture and sale of dual sport bike accessories. As it turns out, One of the part owners is a KLR650 enthusiast and has made several accessories which are or will available shortly. Probably the most sought after accessory for the KLR650 is a center stand. Up until now, Five-Stars was the only manufacturer we knew of. Dual Star, however, will have a center stand available this spring. Also available for the KLR650 are rear tail packs, tank bags, and an exhaust shield. For more info, call Dual Star and ask for Mike at (206)776-7433.

Tim Barnard of Boise, Idaho manufactures rear racks designed to support soft saddle bag luggage. The racks are made specifically for the KLR650 and are made of bent steel tube and are available unfinished or with a durable powder coat. For more information call Tim at (208)377-8770.

BACK ISSUE INDEX

July/August (First issue)
Accessory list, steering head bearing maintenance, budget adventure bike

September/October
FSSNOC rally report, carb needle upgrade, IRC GP110 tire, Perilli MT21 tire, side stand safety switch, KLX650 performance upgrades, KLX650 suspension upgrades

November/December
GIVI tail rack for KLX650, Givi side bags for KLX650 and KLR650, Pelican bags for KLR650, Nonfango hard luggage, Aerostitch soft bags, Carb needle update.

HAVES, WANTS AND NEEDS

1993 KLR650 FOR SALE
Great condition, no dents, almost 100% road touring miles (21,000), has new sprockets and o-ring chain, tires are fairly new. $1,950 located in the Dallas/Ft.Worth area of North Texas.
972-597-6388 (pager) and 972-382-3183 (home) Todd a0460010@shsun3.dseg.ti.com

Corbin Seat For KLR650
Hardly used. Black basket weave with white trim. $190.00.
KLR650 body work, front fairing, rear fender, front fender, hand guards. 1995 colors
Gino (505)281-9886